



THE PUZZLING SIDE OF CHESS

Jeff Coakley

A Few Cheerful Days on the Normal Side

number 78

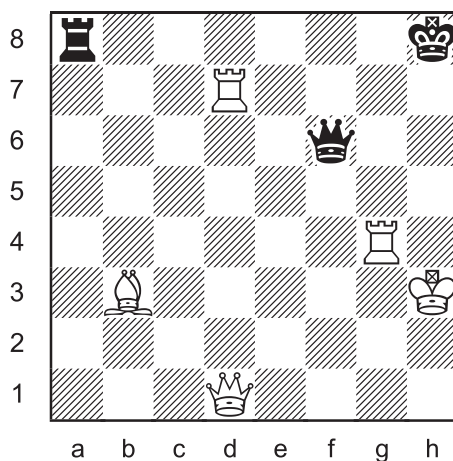
December 26, 2014

After another year of fun and puzzles, it's time again for our holiday break to "the normal side of chess". Like the ghosts of columns past, we have an assortment of direct mates, endgame studies, and game positions.

Let's hear it for 2015. Cheers, everyone!



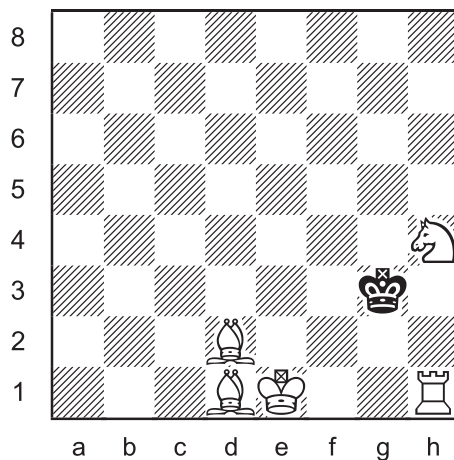
1



White to mate in 2

Nothing is more enticing for potential solvers than a spacious two-move mate. *Merediths* (8-12 pieces) and *miniatures* (7 or less) are natural-born crowd-pleasers.

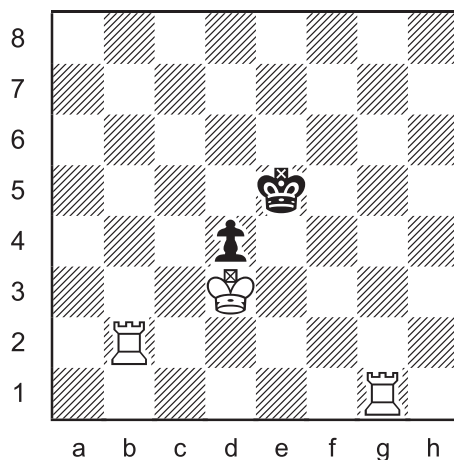
2



White to mate in 2

Next up is a basic winning rook endgame. Unfortunately, you are playing blitz and you only have time for three more moves. Can you score the point?

3



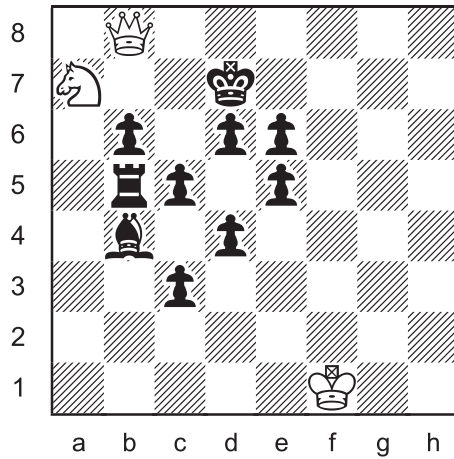
White to mate in 3

The following problem by Sam Loyd is not quite a game position. Hard to imagine the pawn structure arising in actual play. But there is a practical feel to White's task. Queen and knight versus an exposed king.

It's called "The Pilot" and it's mate in five. You're cleared for landing on runway 4.

4

Sam Loyd 1856



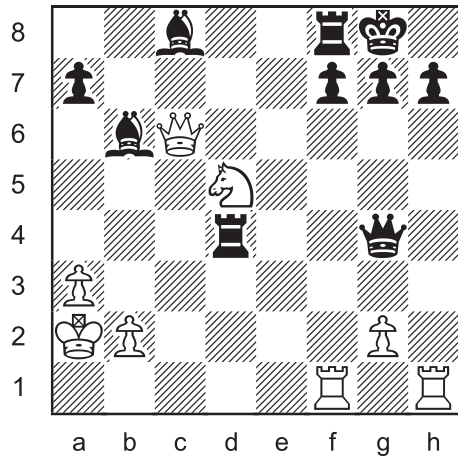
White to mate in 5



Sam Loyd

Moving right along, it's time now for some "how do we win this game" problems. A hundred years ago, you might have enjoyed a cigar while you pondered the next move. But those days are long gone. Sorry, folks, no smoking at the Cafe.

5



White to win

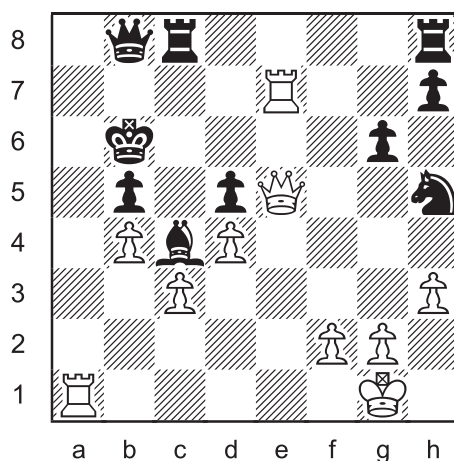
The next “composition” is based on a game won in 1952 by German grandmaster Lothar Schmid (1928-2013). His opponent was future world champion Tigran Petrosian (1929-1984), not an easy guy to beat.

Lothar Schmid has many claims to fame. His personal chess library was the largest in the world, with more than 50,000 books. He was also the chief arbiter for several world championship matches, including Fischer - Spassky 1972.



Waiting for Bobby Fischer

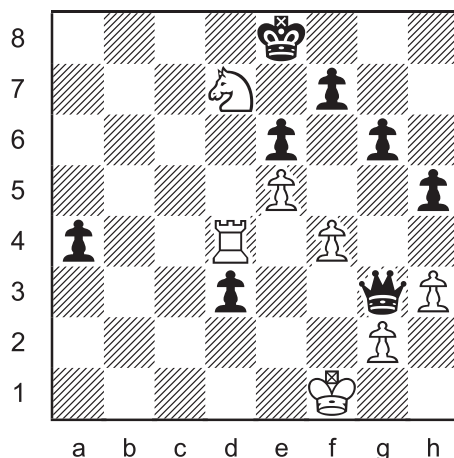
6



White to win

The diagram below seems like the kind of position where White might draw by perpetual check. But why settle for half a point?

7

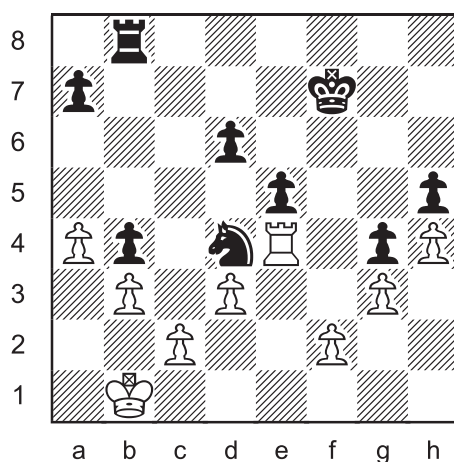


White to win

Time now, if you're in the mood, to "study" a couple endgames.

It looks like White should just resign here, and avoid the grief of a long futile defence. The computer evaluation would certainly justify that decision. What do you say? Give up or play on?

8

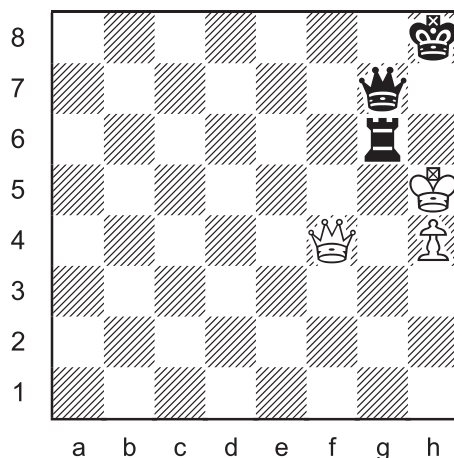


White to move

There's something very satisfying about salvaging a draw from an apparently lost position. It balances out the pangs of anguish caused by earlier mistakes and poor play.

Half good, half bad, could be worse.

9



White to draw

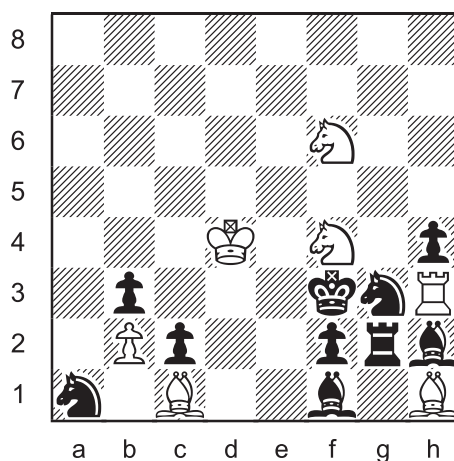
We close out 2014 with another Sam Loyd masterpiece. Like his earlier problem in this column, it was composed when he was fifteen years old.

As you will soon discover, the position has the characteristics of a series-mover. Black can only sit and fidget while White manoeuvres for the mate.

A smooth passage back to *The Puzzling Side of Chess*.

10

Sam Loyd 1856



White to mate in 14

For more problems from “the normal side”, see *A Holiday Visit* (column 21) and *A New Year’s Ride* (column 57).

SOLUTIONS

Except for numbers 4 and 10 (Sam Loyd), all problems by J. Coakley.

1,8 *ChessCafe.com* originals (2014)

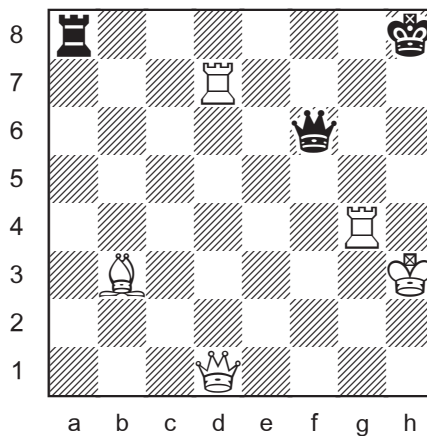
2 *Winning Chess Puzzles For Kids Volume 2* (2010)

3 *Scholar's Mate 121* (2014)

5,6,7,9 *Winning Chess Exercises For Kids* (2004)

PDF hyperlinks. You can advance to the solution of any puzzle by clicking on the underlined title above the diagram. To return to the puzzle, click on the title above the solution diagram.

1



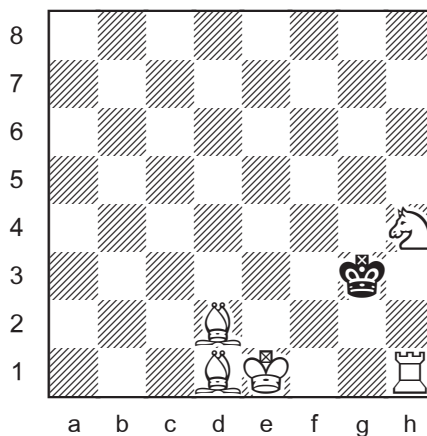
1.Qa1 Double deflection and pin.

1...Rxa1 2.Rg8#

1...Qxa1 2.Rh4#

1...Rf8 2.Rh4#

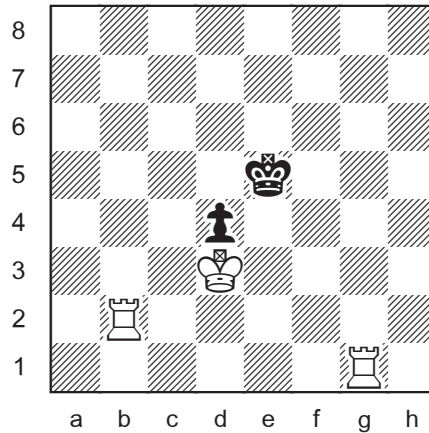
2



1.Ke2 Kg4 2.Kf2#

A double kingmover in a formation that makes you want to castle.

3



1.Rb6

1...Kf4 2.Rb5 Kf3 3.Rf5#

1...Kf5 2.Kxd4 Kf4 3.Rf6#

1...Kd5 2.Rg5#

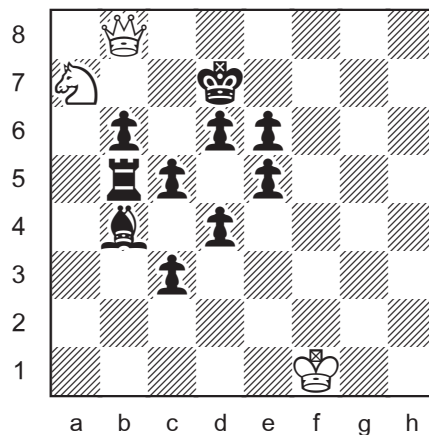
The problem works without the black pawn, but after 1.Rb6 Kf5 there is a second solution by 2.Ke3 Ke5 3.Rg5#.

4

"The Pilot"

Sam Loyd 1856

N.Y. Albion



1.Nc6

Step one: jettison the knight!

1...Kxc6 2.Qc8+ Kd5 3.Qa8+ Kc4 4.Qa2+ Kd3 5.Qe2#

Steps two through five: Fly the friendly diagonals.

continued next page

Declining the sacrifice is no help.

1...c2 2.Qb7+ Ke8 3.Qe7#

1...d5 2.Qb7+ Kd6 3.Nd8! c4 (3...c2 4.Nf7#)
4.Nf7+ Kc5 5.Qc7# (or 5.Qc8#)

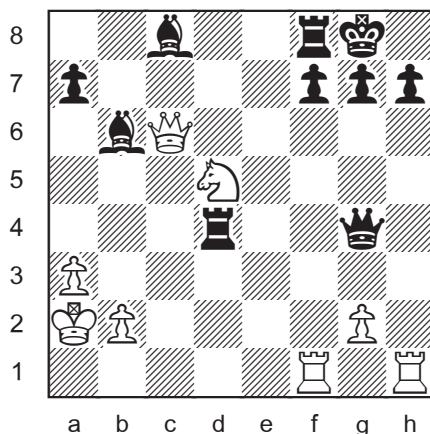
The natural 1.Qb7+ mates in seven. 1...Ke8 2.Nc6 Kf8 3.Qe7+ Kg8
4.Qf6 c2 5.Ne7+ Kh7 6.Qg6+ Kh8 7.Qg8#

After 1.Nxb5 Kc6, Black has seven connected passed pawns for a queen. Good luck to White trying to win that position.

Sam Loyd's insightful book *Chess Strategy* (1878) is subtitled *A Treatise Upon the Art of Problem Composition*. An apropos quote:

“A five-mover is too difficult for the popular taste, and should only be composed to illustrate some peculiarly pleasing theme that cannot be expressed in fewer moves.”

5



1.Qg6

The classic Marshall queen sacrifice! It's mate in 8.

1...hxg6 2.Ne7#

1...fxg6 2.Ne7+ Kh8 3.Rxf8#

1...Qxg6 2.Ne7+ Kh8 3.Nxg6+

3...fxg6 4.Rxf8#

3...Kg8 4.Ne7+ Kh8 5.Rxh7+ Kxh7

6.Rh1+ Bh3 7.Rxh3+ Rh4 8.Rxh4#

continued next page

Defending against the threat of 2.Qxh7# without capturing the queen also fails.

1...h6 2.Nf6+ Kh8 3.Qh7#

1...Bf5 2.Ne7+ (or 2.Nf6+) 2...Kh8 3.Rxh7#

1...Qh4 2.Nf6+! Kh8 (2...Qxf6 3.Qxh7#)

3.Qxh7+ Qxh7 4.Rxh7#

After 1.Ne7+ Kh8, the best White has is a perpetual check by 2.Ng6+ Kg8 3.Ne7+ or a level game with 2.Rxh7+ Kxh7 3.Rh1+ Qh4 4.Rxh4+ Rxh4 5.Nxc8 Rh6.

1.Qc2 can be met by 1...h5 or 1...h6.

As many players will have recognized, the position is very similar to Levitsky - Marshall 1912 with colours reversed. A brilliant victory by American grandmaster Frank Marshall. When the game was over, the spectators tossed gold coins on the board!



A Man Who Loved Cigars

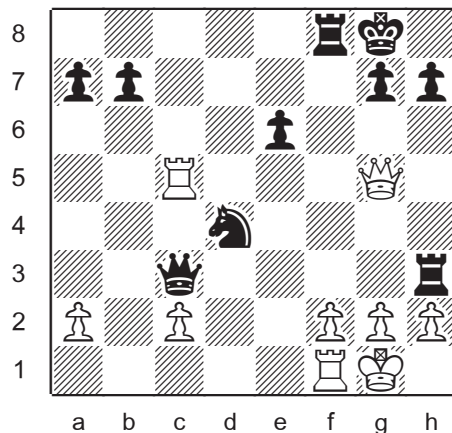
Frank Marshall (1877-1944) was born in New York City, but grew up and learned to play chess in Montreal before returning to New York at age 19. He was one of the five original grandmasters, so titled by Czar Nicholas II at St. Petersburg in 1914, and champion of the United States from 1909 to 1936.

continued next page

Next year marks the centennial anniversary of the *Marshall Chess Club* in Greenwich Village, founded by him in 1915.

Stefan Levitsky - Frank Marshall
Breslau 1912

1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.Nc3 c5 4.Nf3 Nc6 5.exd5 exd5 6.Be2 Nf6
7.0-0 Be7 8.Bg5 0-0 9.dxc5 Be6 10.Nd4 Bxc5 11.Nxe6 fxe6
12.Bg4 Qd6 13.Bh3 Rae8 14.Qd2 Bb4 15.Bxf6 Rxf6 16.Rad1 Qc5
17.Qe2 Bxc3 18.bxc3 Qxc3 19.Rxd5 Nd4 20.Qh5 Ref8 21.Re5 Rh6
22.Qg5 Rxh3 23.Rc5



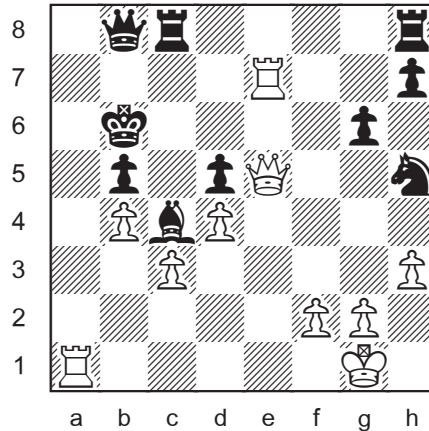
23...Qg3! 0-1

Besides placing the combination in a new setting and making it White to play, my version of this position eliminates a defence that avoids mate. After 24.Qxg3 Ne2+ 25.Kh1 Nxc3+ 26.Kg1, there is no forced mate. Only a won ending with an extra knight. Many analysts give the continuation 26...Nxf1 27.gxh3 Nd2 (without mentioning 28.Rc7 Rf5!) but perhaps 26...Ne2+ 27.Kh1 Rc3 is more clearcut.

Like Frank Marshall, Russian master Stefan Levitsky (1876-1924) has an opening that bears his name. The *Levitsky Attack* is 1.d4 d5 2.Bg5, successfully played in modern times by English GM Julian Hodgson.



6



1.Qd6+

Another astounding queen sacrifice! Mate in five.

1...Qxd6 2.Rea7 followed by R1a6#
(delay mode: 2...Qh2+ 3.Kxh2 Ba2 4.R1xa2)

1...Rc6 2.Qc5+ Rxc5 3.bxc5+ (or 3.dxc5+)
3...Kc6 4.Ra6+ Qb6 5.Rxb6#

White loses after 1.Qxb8+? Rxb8 2.Rea7 Rb7!

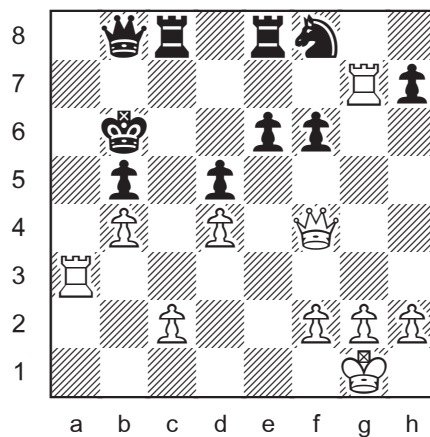
1.Qe6+ Rc6 2.Qxc6+ Kxc6 3.Ra6+ Qb6 4.Re6+ Kc7 5.Rexb6 is equal and 1.Re6+ Rc6 2.Rxc6+ Kxc6 3.Qe6+ Kb7 4.Qd7+ Kb6 (4...Qc7? 5.Ra7+) 5.Qe6+ is perpetual check.

Here is the original combination from the outstanding book *The Chess Sacrifice* (1968) by Serbian IM Vladimir Vukovic (1898-1975).

Lothar Schmid - Tigran Petrosian
Stockholm 1952

1.e4 c6 2.Nc3 d6 3.d4 Nf6 4.Bf4 Qb6 5.Qd2 Nbd7 6.Nf3 e6
7.Bd3 Be7 8.0-0 0-0 9.a4 Qc7 10.e5 Nd5 11.Nxd5 cxd5
12.Rae1 Re8 13.Re3 Nf8 14.Rfe1 Bd7 15.a5 a6 16.exd6 Bxd6
17.Bxd6 Qxd6 18.Ne5 Bb5 19.Bxb5 axb5 20.b4 b6 21.axb6 Qxb6
22.Rc3 f6 23.Ng4 Rac8 24.Rg3 Kf7 25.Nh6+ gxh6 26.Qxh6 Ke7
27.Rg7+ Kd6 28.Qf4+ Kc6 29.Re3 Qb8 30.Ra3 Kb6

See diagram next page.



31.Qd6+! Rc6 (31...Qxd6 32.Rga7) 32.Qc5+ 1-0

A second mundane winning line is 32.Ra6+ Kxa6 33.Qxc6+ Qb6 34.Qxe8, a possibility which is eliminated in the revised problem.

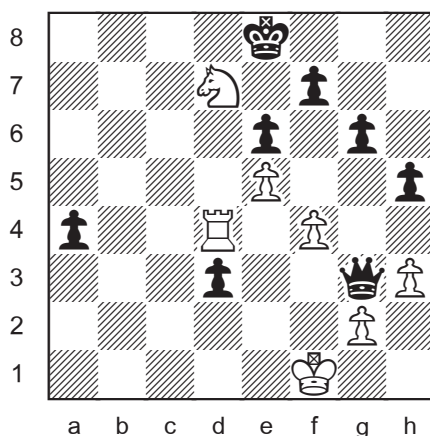


Lothar Schmid congratulates the new champion.

Did you know that Bobby Fischer forfeited the second game of his title match against Boris Spassky? He didn't show up to play, in protest over video cameras in the playing area.

Combined with his loss in round one, that left him down 2-0.
Final score: 12½ - 8½.

7



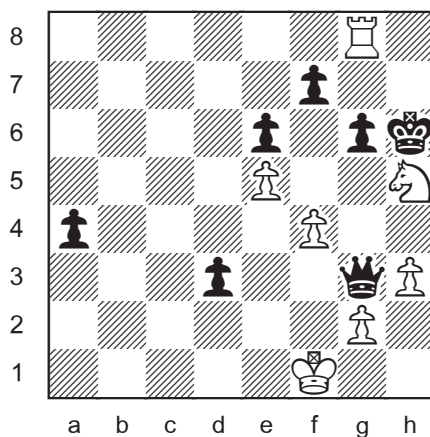
1.Nf6+ Ke7 (1...Kf8 2.Rd8+ reaches the same position as below after 3.Rd8+.)

2.Rd7+ Kf8

3.Rd8+ Kg7 (3...Ke7? 4.Re8#)

4.Rg8+ Kh6

5.Nxh5! (White can perp with 5.Rh8+ Kg7 6.Rg8+.)



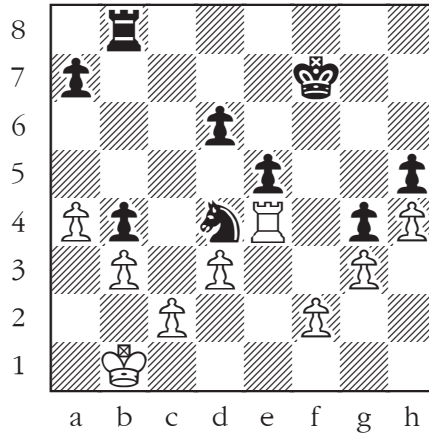
Winning the queen and game.

5...Kxh5 (or 5...d2 or 5...Qe3) 6.Rh8#!

5...gxh5 6.Rxg3

5...Kh7 6.Nxg3 Kxg8 7.Ne4 (7...a3 8.Nc3)

8



The position is evaluated as -4.0 by computers.

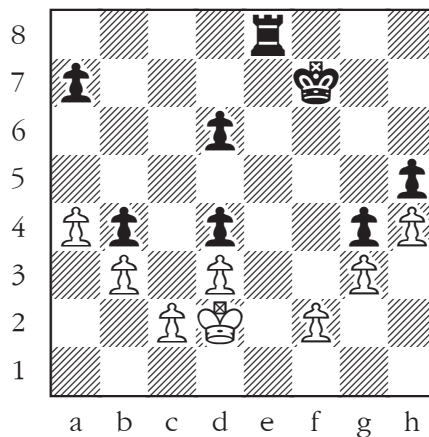
1.Rxd4

White gives up their rook to build an impenetrable fortress!

1...exd4 (After 1...Ke6 2.Re4 or 2.Rc4,
White is up a pawn.)

2.Kc1 Re8

3.Kd2 ½-½ (or 3.Kd1)



A rock solid “wall of pawns”. With the white king on a central file, there are no entry points for the black king or rook. A little human thought will convince you that the position is drawn. Despite the -5.0 evaluation by powerful analytic engines!?

After 3...Ke6 4.Kd1 Rf8 5.Ke2, Black has two breakthrough tricks that they can try. One loses and one draws against proper defence.

- A. 5...Kd5 6.Ke1 Kc5 7.Ke2 Kb6 8.Ke1 Rf5 9.Ke2 Ra5
10.Kd2 Rxa4? 11.bxa4 Ka5 (11...Kc6 is no better.)
12.f3! White wins with a breakthrough of their own.
12...gxf3 13.g4 hxg4 14.h5 g3 15.Ke1 1-0

B. 5...Rf3 6.Ke1 Ke5 7.Ke2 d5 8.Ke1 Re3+!? Take me, please.
 9.Kd2! Maintaining the fortress. ½-½
 (White would lose with 9.fxe3? dxe3 10.Ke2 Kd4!)

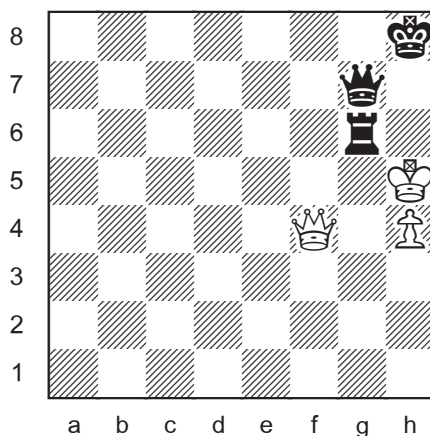
The Puzzling Side of Fortress Draws

The logical consequences of complex fortresses lie beyond the horizon of present-day computer programs. Their depth of calculation is insufficient to realize the impossibility of converting a large material advantage into victory.

How long will it be before programs are able to correctly evaluate this kind of position? If you're interested in computer heuristics dealing with this issue, check out *Detecting Fortresses in Chess* by Matej Guid and Ivan Bratko.

https://ailab.si/matej/doc/Detecting_Fortresses_in_Chess.pdf

9



1.Qf6

A fabulous save! The obvious black moves all lead to a quick draw.

1...Qxf6 stalemate

1...Rxf6 stalemate

1...Kh7 2.Qxg7+ Kxg7 (or 2...Rxg7) stalemate

1...Kg8 2.Qxg6 dead equal

Things are trickier if the black rook moves to g1, g2, or g3.

1...Rg1 2.Qf8+!

The only way to draw.

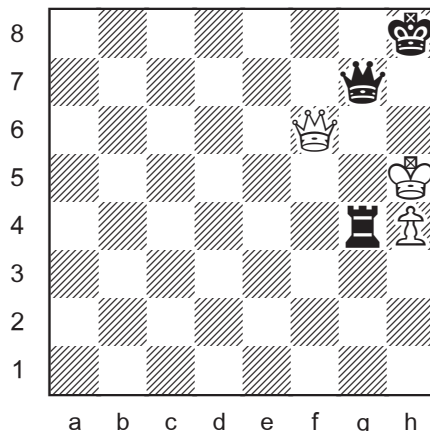
2...Qxf8 stalemate

2...Kh7 3.Qxg7+ Kxg7 (or 3...Rxg7) stalemate

2...Qg8 3.Qh6+ Qh7 4.Qxh7+ Kxh7 stalemate

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But the real challenge is 1...Rg4!? See diagram. How does White survive now? The solution continues below the cartoon.



The position after 1...Rg4!? is a study in itself.

2.Qd6!

On the surface, an incomprehensible move. But there is no other way to hold the draw. (Against 2.Qe6?, Black wins by 2...Rf4!)

2...Rg1 3.Qf8+ (transposes to 1...Rg1)

2...Kg8 3.Qe6+ (3.Qd8+ also draws.)

3...Qf7+ 4.Qxf7+ Kxf7 5.Kxg4 dead equal

3...Kh7 4.Qg8+! (4.Qxg4? Qh6#) 4...Kxg8 (or 4...Qxg8)
stalemate

2...Re4 (or 2...Rc4 or even 2...Rd4) 3.Qd8+ (or 3.Qb8+)

3...Kh7 4.Qg8+ Kxg8 (or 4...Qxg8) stalemate

3...Qg8 4.Qf6+ Qg7 (4...Kh7? 5.Qh6#) 5.Qd8+ repeats

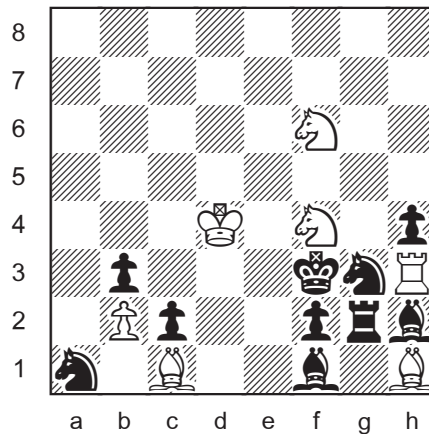
2...Kh7!? 3.Qe6! Another "only move", which draws because of the dual threats 4.Qg8+ and 4.Qxg4.

In the initial position, 1.Qb8+? loses to 1...Qg8! (2.Qe5+ Rg7).

The problem is based on the game Krahnstoever - Seyferth, played at Bitterfield, Germany in 1957. The position was the same except there was a white pawn on g3 and a black pawn on g4. With the g-pawns on the board, the draw is very simple after 1.Qf6! since the interesting lines with 1...Rg1 and 1...Rg4 are not possible.

10

Sam Loyd 1856
Saturday Courier



1.Kc5

A survey of the position reveals the following.

The only black pieces with any mobility are the two bishops. But if the bishop on f1 moves, White mates with Bxg2#. So Black is stuck shuffling the other bishop between h2 and g1.

The movement of the white forces is also limited if they want to keep Black in “shuffle mode”. In fact, the only piece with any freedom is the white king. And he is restricted to the dark squares! If the white king moves to a light square, Black checks with the bishop on f1 and then promotes with ...f1=Q. (Note that 1.Rxh2? is met by 1...Nxh1.)

The winning plan is for the white king to traverse the board on the dark squares and eventually capture on h4, then to play Rxg3# when the black bishop is on g1.

But things are not quite that simple. For example, after 1.Ke5 Bg1 2.Kd6 Bh2 3.Ke7 Bg1 4.Kf8 Bh2 5.Kg7 Bg1 6.Kh6 Bh2 7.Kg5 Bg1 8.Kxh4 Bh2, the black bishop is on h2 and White has no way to lose a tempo. Curiously enough, a king cannot lose a tempo if he stays on squares of the same colour!

White can win material in that position with 9.Ng4 or 9.N6h5, but there is no forced mate.

However, there is one light square where the bishop on f1 would not be able to check the white king: a8.

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Contemplating resolutions.

Therefore, to mate in 14, the white king's journey must include a stopover in the distant light corner!

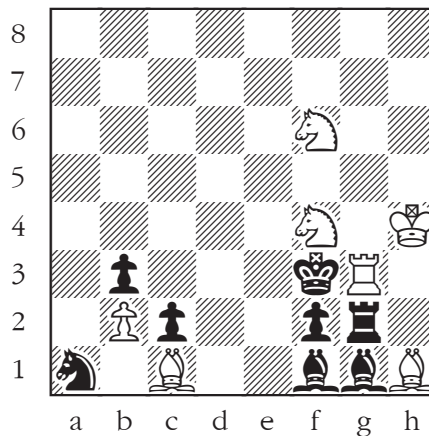
1...Bg1 2.Kb6 Bh2 3.Ka7 Bg1 4.Ka8

How sweet it is!

4...Bh2 5.Kb8 Bg1 6.Kc7 Bh2 7.Kd8 Bg1 8.Ke7 Bh2 9.Kf8 Bg1
10.Kg7 Bh2 11.Kh6 Bg1 12.Kg5 Bh2 13.Kxh4

The king captures on h4 with the bishop at h2. Zugzwang.

13...Bg1 (13...Bc4 14.Bxg2#) 14.Rxg3#



The *Puzzle King* strikes again.

Until next year!

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